



FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

Home of American Impressionism

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Commerce Committee

RE: Proposed S.B. No. 132 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE CONSORTIUM OF CONNECTICUT ART MUSEUMS

Chair Lebeau, Chairman Perone, members of the committee, my name is Jeffrey Andersen and I am director of the Florence Griswold Museum. I would like to offer the following comments on Proposed S.B. No. 132 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE CONSORTIUM OF CONNECTICUT ART MUSEUMS

I am here today to testify on behalf of a consortium of seven leading independent art museums in Connecticut that attract over 360,000 visitors to Connecticut each year, providing a reliable economic impact to the State of over \$25 million dollars annually. Our seven museums are a large part of why Connecticut is seen as a cultural hub, a tourism destination, and a place with an unparalleled quality of life. We present nationally acclaimed exhibitions and our collections consist of art treasures of incalculable value to our State and its citizenry. I am here today to ask you to make an investment in our future – an investment that will be returned many fold to the state's economy. We are seeking an annual appropriation of \$1.5 million dollars from the State of Connecticut to be shared equally by our seven member museums.

Appropriated funds will be expressly designated for *increased* operating expenditures on exhibitions, educational programs and marketing. Located strategically across our State, our seven institutions will be able to contribute even more to the cultural and economic vitality of our state through this partnership. Such an appropriation will enable our institutions, both individually and collectively, to deepen the impact of what we do best – the presentation of exhibitions and educational programs designed to attract the participation of residents and visitors to Connecticut.

For our part, the Florence Griswold Museum serves as a gateway destination for southeastern Connecticut, attracting nearly 65,000 visitors annually to see and learn about Connecticut's influential role in shaping American art. We are committed to investing newly appropriated funds in highly targeted program and marketing efforts that will attract thousands of new out-of-state cultural visitors to Connecticut. These visitors will, in turn, stay in our hotels and inns, eat in our restaurants, and support our small retail businesses, spending an average of \$600 per visit.



Studies show that the State can expect a leveraged return of \$6 for every \$1 invested in this way. Collectively, this means that the new funds promise to have an economic impact of at least \$9 million annually. I should add that grants and funds currently available through the Department of Economic and Community Development are not sufficient to undertake such activities and this is why we are turning to you.

These are times that require new regional-based approaches for Connecticut to compete in the marketplace. By working together to deepen the impact of what we do best, we believe this is an effective way for the State to make a relatively small investment that will bring a very good return. On behalf of the Consortium of Connecticut Art Museums and the public that we serve, I ask that the budget bill be amended to reflect our proposal that 1.5 million dollars be appropriated to these seven museums to be shared equally by all while returning to the State an impact six times the investment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on this important issue.